

POLITICAL BUREAU MINUTES.....18 November 1968

Present: Full: Nelson, Robertson, Cunningham, Henry(late)
Alt: Small Staff: Rogers, Gordon Other: Joel S.(NYC Org.)
Absent: Alt: Seymour(exc.) Staff: Martin
Meeting convened 8:30 p.m.

- Agenda:
1. General Information and Correspondence
 2. Organization
 3. Chicago YSA Conference
 4. Internal
 5. National Conference Preparations
 6. Press

1. General Information and Correspondence:

- a. Fox Conference: The Cleveland Conference has been postponed until the 2nd week in Feb. Chris K. reports that they had a preliminary meeting and decided on postponement because of insufficient preparation.
- b. Sherwood: Canadian Wohlforthite "Spark" reports Canadian authorities may be prosecuting Sherwood because when he applied for landed immigrant status (after fleeing U.S. to avoid the draft) he neglected to report his U.S. criminal record--a few minor civil-rights arrests. The circular from the Workers League describes him as an emigre. If he is deported to the U.S. he will be in trouble.

Motion: To adopt a statement expressing our solidarity with Brother Sherwood as we would with any member of the working-class movement under attack. We should note, however, that because Sherwood fled to Canada to avoid the draft, choosing a personal, non-political solution to the problem faced by working-class youth, our solidarity with him cannot have any more particular application in his case than general revolutionary and class solidarity. Passed

- c. Britain: We have received two excellent and informative letters from George and Peggy M. The last letter from Peggy asked why we had stencilled up the exchange with Crawford. The reason is that we found it amusing and wanted the comrades to share the fun. The Matgamna group (tendency out of the Irish Workers Group) has evidently entered the Cliff group.
Disc: Cunningham
- d. U. of Calif.: Two sit-ins were held at Berkeley over the Regents' banning of Black Panther leader Cleaver on campus. Our comrade Libby participated in the second sit-in, the less "respectable" one. She was arrested, sentenced to 10 days in prison beginning 13 December, fined \$300 "restitution for damages" to the University, placed on 1-year court probation. She will be on disciplinary probation for the Fall and Winter school quarters and suspended from school for the Spring quarter. She reports these penalties are light compared with many of those arrested. The movement on campus is "nearly dead"--only about 25% of the student body was involved in the student strike. Libby has been doing an excellent job on campus, has become known as "the campus Spartacist". According to Chris, the Bay Area comrades seem to have been over-occupied with the CLP split and somewhat inattentive to Libby's campus work. We should ask the Bay Area comrades what cost as a result of Lib-

- by's "restitution" will be sustained by the local. The Bay Area comrades understand that Libby's debt is a political one to be met not by her alone, but should not feel the burden falls on their local alone.
- e. NYC Teachers' Strike: Has apparently been settled. "Sell-out" was charged by the delegates. Their reaction undermines the Black Nationalist and liberal view of Shanker as a neo-Hitler forcing his union to a racist strike. Shanker is just a social-democratic bureaucrat weakly responsive to his membership. Finally, we got out a leaflet on the strike, and distributed 3,000, with good response, to two massive teachers' meetings and rallies yesterday. Robertson also participated in a debate at Columbia U. on 14 Nov. Disc: Nelson
 - f. Marcus group: We have 4 people now in the SDS Labor Committee. It is a wide-open, activist-oriented, loosely organized group which is now involved in an organizing project in the garment center. They have some screwball approaches--Marcus' "Tax the Landlords" panacea, etc.--plus a good line on the teachers' strike and some other issues. They are growing fast despite lack of success in their projects--garment center, the now-defunct West Side Tenants' Union, etc. Their composition is exclusively middle-class student radicals. PL had entered the group previously; Wohlforthites have sent a couple of people in. Turner and Hugh F. are also involved--they turned up there immediately after leaving the SL for its allegedly "non-proletarian, student" orientation. The SDS Labor Committee claims affiliated groups in Phila., Berkeley, Seattle, Washington, D.C. Disc: Joel S., Nelson, Gordon, Robertson, Cunningham, Joel S., Gordon, Nelson, Joel S., Cunningham
 - g. Bolivia: The Bolivian Trotskyists have sent us a 240-page manuscript of an anti-guerrillaist book-pamphlet in the hope that we can print it for them, in Spanish. We cannot possibly handle this for them. We could possibly print a short article in Spanish for Espartaco and/or a short article in English. Disc: Small, Nelson, Robertson, Gordon, Henry
 - h. SSEU: The Militant Caucus has put out 2 issues of the "Militant Voice" Newsletter.

2. Organization:

- a. Microfilm Rights: The Xerox Corporation's University Microfilms, Inc. is after us again for microfilm rights for the SPARTACIST. Originally we had sent a full file to the Wisconsin State Historical Society people, who handle most of the labor and socialist publications, but it was never received by them. We should check with Jack Glenn for legal advice, as our publication is not copyrighted.
- b. Rent: The building management informs us that they will renew the office lease for \$115 a month--a \$20 monthly increase. The considerations are: (1) it is hard to find comparable space elsewhere, and would probably take Robertson 6 weeks of looking, as it did to find this place originally; (2) the job of moving itself is considerable, and will take several comrades several days; (3) all our equipment, such as shelving and tables, are planned for the present space, dimensions and set-up; (4) it would cost us \$250-500 in expense for moving

itself incl. replacement in new location of partition, security fixtures (door locks and reinforcements), etc.

Motion: To sign a new 2-year lease at \$115 a month. Passed

3. Chicago YSA Conference: Will be held Thanksgiving. It is a fake "National Convention" with "internal discussion bulletins" which look exactly like issues of the Young Socialist, complete with sub blank. It is really a rally, not a decision-making convention. We will send 1-2 people out from New York and several from the Midwest. Disc: Joel S., Rogers, Gordon, Robertson, Nelson
4. Internal: Nelson has worked up a draft "Open Letter" to the El-lensites. Turner, meanwhile, is undoubtedly writing more documents to circulate to our members. Steve S. phoned here, in part to inquire about Turner's departure, requesting PB minutes of the meeting at which Turner quit and copies of the Turner documents. We have only a few copies, should write Turner from here to ask him to send copies to our main centers so that the comrades can read them. The Austin comrades have also received the resignations by Turner and Hugh F. and report that they and the Houston comrades are concerned over it. Turner has done a good, if nasty and dishonest, job in his protesting letter. We must get the documenting minutes out, plus perhaps a statement giving the facts of the situation and the background. Disc: Gordon, Cunningham, Gordon, Robertson, Nelson, Gordon

5. National Conference Preparations:

- a. Scheduling: Several reactions received from around the country about proposed postponement. We phoned Joe V. (New Orleans), who was pleased because postponement would involve, concomitantly, a tour by Robertson to the South in the interim. Chris K. (Bay Area) phoned here because, as Bay Area minutes showed, G. had proposed a motion to demand a National Conference by Christmas. Chris' reaction to our proposal then was non-committal; letter received today agreed a delay seemed reasonable because of the necessity for advance preparations and the press of other work, indicated he had spoken with some of the Bay Area comrades about it and met with no violent objections. Disc: Small, Robertson, Joel S., Cunningham, Henry

Motion: To postpone the National Conference until late spring or early summer. Passed

- b. Central Committee: We now have a 4-man PB, 5-man CC. Co-option to make PB odd-numbered would make the CC even-numbered, unless others are co-opted to CC at the same time. We have some serious problems and a relatively inexperienced cadre. The faction fight, which was in part a reaction to the difficult times through which we are passing, has reinforced the difficulties from which it sprang, by depriving us of a section of the cadre. Disc: Gordon, Nelson, Cunningham, Robertson, Henry, Joel S., Gordon, Nelson, Robertson, Gordon, Robertson, Nelson

Motion by Nelson: To poll the CC on co-option of Gordon as a full member of the CC and PB. Tabled

- c. Resolution: We need a drafting committee. Every comrade on

the PB has a particular valuable contribution to make.

Motion: To have a 3-man committee of Henry, Small and Robertson.

The PB as a whole will be the editing body.

Passed

6. Press:

Motion: To table to next meeting.

Passed

Meeting adjourned 11:55 p.m.